

An End to Evil Thoughts and Deeds against Israel

Sometimes I wonder why I spend my lonely nights wondering about the mind-set of petulant people and groups who wallow in animosity and hatred towards those with whom they disagree. Above all, the haters of Israel and the prejudiced, sometimes antisemitic, boycotters of Israel haunt my reverie.

The latest instance of this deplorable mind-set is the revelation that a young woman, named Amira Jumaa, said to be 20 years old, a Kuwait national whose mother is a Palestinian from Jordan, a former student at the prestigious Paris Institute of Political Studies, usually referred to as Science Po, made repulsive remarks about Jews on Facebook.

In an online debate with an Israeli student, Jumaa wrote to him, "You don't belong anywhere in this world-that's why you guys are scum and rats and discriminated against wherever you are. Do not blame it on the poor Palestinians...I am not an immigrant from France. I am from Kuwait so my country can buy you and your parents and put you in ovens."

Her comments were made public in October 2015 in the website blog, *The Inglorious Basterds*, named after the 2009 film of the same name directed by Quentin Tarantino, about American Jewish soldiers who hunted Nazis in World War II.

Jumaa has been punished in two ways for her disgraceful remarks. She was at first suspended in October 2015 from Sciences Po, the world class institution that ranks first in Continental Europe for political and international studies. Its alumni, who must be ashamed of Jumaa, have included hundreds of prominent and distinguished figures, including the last four and five of the last six presidents of France, more than 30 heads of foreign states, and former heads of the

United Nations, the IMF, the European Bank, and diplomats, major business leaders, and bankers.

After a college disciplinary committee hearing by five professors and five students, Jumaa was expelled in December 2015 from Sciences Po, the first student ever to be expelled since the creation of the school in 1872. Also, she was immediately dismissed from her position in the cultural division in the French Consulate in New York, where she had been an intern as part of a school program.

Although so young, Jumaa, who is said to be very wealthy, a jet setter and a horse-back rider, also worked in the Kuwaiti Embassy in Athens. That Embassy issued no statement about the nature of her remarks.

What is most disturbing about the remarks was not simply the expected ant-Israel tirade and her advocacy of a boycott of Israel but the crude antisemitism, referring to the Holocaust. Her behavior provides a timely warning for those in the U.S. engaging in intense anti-Israeli activity. Though they are of course not connected to Jumaa in any possible way, the recent proponents in the U.S. of boycott of Israel must be concerned about the link of anti-Israel animus and anti-Semitic prejudice that she has illustrated.

The recent culprits of the intense bias against Israel are familiar: the American Studies Association (ASA) in December 2013, the American Anthropological Association in November 2015, and the National Women's Studies Association in December 2015. These groups do not openly profess antisemitic opinions as does Jumaa, though some of them have talked of symbolic action to "cleanse" Israel. But all of them have called for a boycott of Israel academic institutions and, usually, Israeli personnel.

Hypocritically, they have spoken of this as "concerned engagement." Yet in effect, it is the exact opposite. It is a

refusal to engage in a normal dialogue with scholars who should be colleagues. The boycotters are opposing the very institutions that are the center of freedom of expression and major contributors to human welfare.

Jumma, the Kuwaiti young woman, issued a grave threat to the existence of Jews as well as to the State of Israel. The Americans have issued a grave threat to academic freedom. The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) has criticized the boycotters and their selective boycott of Israel for acting against the fundamental principles of academic freedom and free exchange of ideas. Indeed, the boycotters have imposed an ideological litmus test. Political or religious views cannot be used as a test for participation in an academic community. Moreover, the boycotters, who perhaps think of themselves as liberal humanitarians, are in effect counterproductive reactionaries preventing the search for peace and discouraging Palestinian authorities from coming to the negotiating table.

These boycotters, moreover, have perverted the purpose of their own professional organizations. For example, 1,800 people attended the business meeting of the Anthropological Association on November 20, 2015, the largest number in its history. Their main purpose was not to vote on any anthropological issue but on boycott of Israeli academic institutions. At the meeting, 88.4 per cent, 1040-136, voted in favor of the resolution to boycott Israeli academic institutions and not to enter into any formal collaboration with Israeli academic institutions, ostensibly until Israeli academics end their "complicity" with Israel's human rights violations.

It would be enticing to know what exact anthropological perspectives the 88.4 per cent supposedly concerned with human rights brought to the cancer research, DNA-based biological computer, the vaccines for diabetes and the examining conditions for Alzheimer's at the Weizmann Institute in

Rehovot, or to the Brain Labs at the Hadassah Medical Center.

In spring 2016, the full membership, about 12,000, of AAA will vote electronically on the November boycott resolution. The sensible and reasonable members might ponder if they want to have the disgraced Amira Jumaa as an intellectual soul mate. Anthropologists, like all sensible people, should confront the evil words of Jumaa and the evil deeds of Islamist terrorists. Implicitly, her message was that Jews are unwelcome in the world and can be put in ovens. The AAA must show it does not share her views by renouncing the boycott resolution.